UNITED NATIONS

ST

Secretariat

ST/IC/1992/6
24 January 1992

INFORMATION CIRCULAR

To: Members of the staff

From: The Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management

Subject: SECRETARY-GENERAL'S ADDRESS TO THE STAFF OF THE UNITED NATIONS ON 22 JANUARY 1992 AND STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE STAFF COMMITTEE AT HEADQUARTERS

The text of the address to the staff of the United Nations by the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and the statement by the President of the Staff Committee at Headquarters, Mr. Ronald Hewson, are reproduced herewith for the information of all staff members.

I. STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

*I should first like to pay a special tribute to the memory of Dr. Martinka Pumpalova, who laid down her life in the service of the United Nations. Her tragic death in Somalia two weeks ago saddened me deeply. I suggest that we observe a moment of silence in her memory, and in memory of all the other staff members who have died in the line of duty.

[Moment of silence]

I want you all to know that the safety and security of the staff is a matter of the greatest importance for me personally. I cannot stress this strongly enough. I am deeply concerned that over 100 staff members are now being kept under detention or are in prison. I intend to do my utmost to work for their release.

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* The Secretary-General delivered this portion of his statement in English.

As the Organization responds to new challenges, its staff are being called upon to undertake new and difficult tasks, sometimes, under conditions which involve elements of risk. I will do everything in my power to make sure that this risk is minimal.

I very much appreciate the way in which you, the staff of this great Organization, have welcomed me to my new responsibilities.

I have already met many of you and look forward to meeting colleagues from all duty stations. I plan to see as much as possible of the United Nations operations in the field, as soon as I can.

Indeed, I greatly welcomed my recent opportunity of stopping in El Salvador after the signing ceremony in Mexico City last week, and of seeing the outstanding job done by the staff of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) in the extremely complex operation they are undertaking in that country, including monitoring the observance of human rights. More than 30 per cent of the staff of ONUSAL are women, and the staff belong to more than a dozen nationalities.

The Organization that we all have the privilege to serve belongs to all the peoples of the world. It represents, as my most distinguished predecessor, H.E. Sr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, said in his farewell address to you last month, "the best hope of all humanity".

Let me take this immediate opportunity to pay warm tribute to the former Secretary-General. During his leadership of the United Nations, it moved from the wings to the centre of the world's stage. Today, the Organization is engaged in the full panorama of international issues, and is again playing the major part foreseen for it by the drafters of the San Francisco Charter in 1945.

The successes of the past years are a matter of record, as is the new light in which the world now sees the United Nations. The concept and practice of peace-keeping have gained new dimensions, as operations of unprecedented variety and scope are being mounted all over the world, and as the Organization's essential peace-keeping role has been reinforced.

Over the last few years, the Organization has, in some ways, changed greatly. Its relevance has been re-established. At the same time, novel and far-reaching problems are being placed on our agenda. It will be our task to build on the foundations which have now been so effectively reinforced.

I believe that the Organization will need to review all aspects of its machinery for the maintenance of international peace and security so as to ensure that it is fully adapted to the new requirements of international action through the United Nations. It is, of course, not for me but for Member Governments to examine the functioning of the related intergovernmental institutions. But, as the chief Administrative Officer of the Secretariat, it is my task to look at how our organizational response is structured, staffed and coordinated, as well as supported and financed.

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We all know that there has been considerable discussion of reform of the Organization in recent months. I have read more than 22 reports on this subject. I have been deeply engaged in studying the matter, and I shall be announcing my initial decisions over the next few weeks. I simply want to assure you that any reforms that are carried out will be in the best interests of the Organization. I shall be most mindful of the concerns and interests of the staff of the United Nations. I intend to rely primarily on existing staff and maximum use of officials currently serving in the Organization. In this connection, I propose to minimize external recruitment in the early stages of this process.

I believe that our tasks together over the next five years will stretch the capacities of this Organization to the fullest degree, as we carry out the new agenda of the United Nations. It is evident that in fulfilling my responsibilities I will need your fullest support and cooperation. I am aware of the vast resources of talent, experience and loyalty among the staff, and how your commitment sustained the Organization through the darkest days. I feel sure that I can count on you.

*It is too soon to discuss my various responsibilities as head of the United Nations Secretariat in detail. It is not too soon, however, to stress that I am well aware of your concerns regarding salaries, pensions and career development. I shall study these questions carefully and shall spare no effort in addressing your concerns. I do not want to make any specific promises that I might be unable to keep. I can promise you, however, that I shall give staff problems serious consideration in order to afford you maximum safety and every possible advantage.

I believe that the paramount consideration in the employment of the staff must be the need to provide the Organization with the services of people who possess the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. Discrimination on any ground must not be tolerated. Improving the status of women in the Secretariat must, in particular, receive our full attention. I shall be guided in this regard by Article 8 of the Charter, which stresses that no restrictions shall be placed on the eligibility of men and women to participate under conditions of equality in the organs of the United Nations. Preventing all forms of discrimination and ensuring that decisions in respect of staff are based on merit are the keys to good administration and maintaining staff morale.

I firmly believe in the process of consulting with staff members on questions of staff policy before final decisions can be taken. Moreover, the Staff Rules and Regulations mandate such a process. Functioning properly, staff representative bodies can make a positive contribution to management.

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* The Secretary-General delivered this portion of his statement in French.

I place the highest value on the quality of management. Why? Because as the Organization plays an increasingly operational role, programme performance becomes more important, and its criteria have become quite concrete.

My management policy will be to delegate and expect managers to manage. From a consultative, deliberative body, our Organization has become an increasingly operational institution. The nature of administration and management must therefore change. I shall, inter alia, do everything within my power to make administrative procedures simpler, more transparent and easier to follow.

I am concerned by the fact that some members of the Secretariat staff are receiving salary supplements from their countries. This practice is totally incompatible with the independence of the international civil service and cannot be tolerated.

As you know, it is for the General Assembly as well as for me and the competent Secretariat units to take decisions regarding the management of the Organization. The General Assembly formulates policy directives to guide the Secretary-General in executing its mandates, and it is with the greatest pleasure that I prepare to work with the representatives of the General Assembly. Within the framework of these policy directives, decision-making authority ultimately rests with the Secretary-General. I am convinced that, in this spirit, the Governments of Member States will give their full support to the chief administrative officer of the Organization.

Dear colleagues and friends, for when we are colleagues we are friends, I should like, by way of conclusion, to recall that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations will take place during my term as Secretary-General. We must begin preparing at once to make this anniversary an event that will mark the history of international relations and give a new dimension to our institution.

At the same time, I believe that we must safeguard the purposes and principles of the Charter so that our Organization may become an even more effective instrument at the service of mankind. Its standards are excellence, reflected in its accomplishments, integrity, in its respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter, and impartiality, in its efforts to harmonize the views of all Member States. It is my view that, in choosing to serve the Organization, staff members commit themselves to striving for excellence and not settling for a close approximation. Enhancing the effectiveness of our Organization requires close collaboration between Member States, the staff of the Organization and the Secretary-General. This collaboration must be strengthened and revitalized. I am convinced that these goals are well within our reach if we do not lose sight of the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

With confidence, enthusiasm and fervour we shall work together, cooperate together and struggle together to strengthen the dialogue between peoples and nations, maintain peace and promote cooperation - new cooperation between East

and West in the wake of the cold war and ongoing cooperation between North and South, pursued since the end of the decolonization period.

I wish you all - somewhat belatedly, since it is already the end of January - a very happy 1992, much success and happiness and much satisfaction in your work.

II. STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE STAFF COMMITTEE AT HEADQUARTERS

I welcome you all to this, our first meeting with our new Secretary-General.

Mr. Secretary-General, on behalf of the staff I welcome you to your important post at the helm of the Secretariat.

You have assumed office at a time of unprecedented change. The United Nations is being called upon to meet ever more challenges and to play a broader role in peacemaking and the alleviation of human suffering. During your term of office history will continue being made by the Organization, as the peoples of the world increasingly look to the United Nations to bring them relief from war, starvation, disease and other afflictions of the modern world.

Mr. Secretary-General, you have a staff that has always risen to the occasion and proved itself over and over again, often in situations of grave danger. We are completely dedicated to this Organization, and shall continue to ensure that it is always in top operating form, and ready to meet whatever challenges may face it.

The staff representatives look forward to excellent relations with you and your representatives in the consultative process, which plays such a crucial role in the establishment and discussion of our terms of service and conditions of life as international civil servants.

Again we welcome you, and wish you good fortune and complete success at the head of the Secretariat.